

Legislative Issue Brief – Funding for Child Advocacy Centers



Catawba County Board of Commissioner's Legislative Goal

Support an increase in State Funding for Child Advocacy Centers

Background

Catawba County has one of the state's strongest Child Advocacy Centers (CAC), which is fully accredited and cited as a "best-practice model." Catawba County's CAC promotes a coordinated response (typically with law enforcement, Child Protective Services, a mental health therapist, and the District Attorney's Office) to serious child sexual and physical abuse cases, which may result in criminal charges. Currently, Catawba County CAC is only receiving 8% of its funding from the state (estimated to be \$17,857 in Fiscal Year 2009-10). Although State funding for CACs is a relatively small allocation, these State dollars are unrestricted in use and can provide great flexibility to a budget that is primarily made up of a patchwork of private grants and donations.—Catawba County supports the restoration of the allocation to at least \$25,000 for each of the accredited CACs (22) statewide.

During Fiscal Year 2008-09, Catawba County's CAC conducted 263 child interviews and 124 medical exams on-site. Interviews on site are conducted to decrease trauma and reduce anxiety associated with the investigative process, as measured by a 90 percent positive response from parents. In addition, medical exams on-site at the CAC are approximately half the cost of an emergency room visit and exam.

Governor Perdue's recommended 2010-2011 budget adjustments include a reduction in State funding for Child Advocacy Centers. It is expected that these proposed reductions would result in a reduction of about \$18,000 to the Catawba County Child Advocacy Center. This proposed budget reduction clearly conflicts with the legislative goals of the Board of Commissioners.

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